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APRIL 2005

# This Old House

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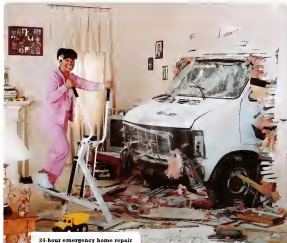


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Pull on your workboots and get working  
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It's the architectural elements of a backdrop. See this guide to a formal garden that defies its rules and shape. How the queen found. See page 10 for more on designing your outdoor space. PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL HILMAN

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you should still see

your thumbprint



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A WATER GARDEN IS AN INVALUABLE WAY TO INVITE HARMONY TO YOUR HOME. It will unify and add drama to your landscape, create a sense of retreat and increase the value of your property.

As a first step towards creating your own dream away and photo research through books and articles on water gardens. Are you drawn to a naturalistic pond that looks like it's been there forever? Or do flights of fancy take you to exotic locales like Hawaii? Perhaps you admire the formality of stylized, asymmetrical Asian waterscopes? The possibilities are limitless.

Next, wander around your property to visualize what will look best and how it will strike a balance with the surrounding landscape and architectural style of your home. Follow your imagination, but use practicality as a guide when choosing the location. Some areas, such as a low lying spot, which will require a special drainage system, may cause more maintenance. There is even a tip-off to a site filled with trees, as their leaves will need to be cleaned out regularly unless you are developing a large, naturalistic pond.

A consultation with an experienced landscape architect will help you make informed choices. The expert will know how to use the location to create the perfect garden for you. Whether it's a contemplative escape set away from the bustle of the house, or a fountain outside your window that lulls you to sleep, an expert will help you find a style that suits your tastes and enhances the look and feel of your home.



For a magical setting at night, under water lights will create an inviting glow and lights around or under the base of a tree will produce an enchanted forest effect.



With a little help from nature, a property owner can do the most with a little bit of a pump. Cypripedium, submerged plants - such as *Potamogeton* - control the speed of algae. One goldfish for every 10-20 gallons of water and bullfrogs will minimize the excessive population. And one scavenger, like the *Parachanna*, per square foot will remove debris.

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PHOTO: JEFFREY MAYER; ART: DAVID L. ROSS/STUDIO

## [ FROM THIS OLD HOUSE ]

### Getting a jump on spring yard work

WITH TOH TV'S ROGER COOK

**T**HE MORE YOU KNOW I feel like a machine at the spring—

I can't wait to get going. I've made a through a sweat of building out, hard work and pain. I've shined through every candle, looking for the missing new ideas, growing, from things—well digging my hands into the soil.

But just because my brain is thinking spring doesn't mean. Mother Nature is on the same wavelength. In my section of the weather map, it's often too cold or too rainy to get plants in the ground. Still, there's a lot of prep work I can do, like cleaning leaves and debris out of flower beds, and adding them to make them look new. If the ground is very wet and I might do more damage than good, then I'll just get out and walk around, seeing what doesn't look so great, what needs pruning, or if the water has left any casualties in its wake.

If worse comes to worst and I can't get outside, then I make sure my tools are ready. Spring is a good time to sharpen cutting blades on mowers and shears, clean and lubricate wheel parts to keep rust at bay, and tune up gas-powered tools by changing the oil, spark plugs, and air filters. It's also the time to repair broken tools, or head to the garden center to replace them if they're beyond saving. While I'm there, I'll stock up on compost, potting soil, and fertilizers for the season. I might even find some early-spring plants for that first burst of spring color.

If I can't work outside all day, I'll be the first one out of the gate—when the weather cooperates, of course.



## [ CONTRIBUTORS ]



For more than 20 years, professional photographer Richard W. Brown has been shooting architectural, interior and exterior photography. He is a member of the American Society of Professional Photographers (ASPP) and the International Brotherhood of Professional Photographers (IBP). He is also a member of the National Association of Professional Photographers (NAPPP).

In the months following the 9/11 attacks, Jeffrey Rothblat showed how to break into an expensive business market by being a multifamily broker. "Prices have gone up so rapidly, this seems like a perfect strategy right now," says Rothblat. By having a relationship with a broker, Rothblat says, homeowners can potentially reap the benefits by providing the multifamily into a single family or selling a new piece for a substantial profit. Rothblat has worked with business and personal finance for 10 years, including Real Estate, Business, and Finance.



According to TOH technical writer Mark Powers, the simplest and cheapest method of this strategy is to use a multifamily space. It's just about any family homeowner selling a building floor with a full-time apartment. "It's the perfect gift for because there are no rental costs, a little more, and you can have yourself a whole new space for a day," says Powers. The former architect student works as a designer for other people coming to the city and now Powers is looking for a second house to buy—building and renovating. He owns Brooklyn, New York.



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## ON THE JOB

IDEAS • TRENDS • TECHNOLOGY • TIPS • MONEY • TOOLS • GADGETS



## Rollin' Home

WHAT WAS THE MOBILITY OF AGENCY and the spirit of a well-crafted house? A pre-fabricated house built with all the conveniences anyone could want—dishwasher, bath, sleeping quarters, Internet hookup, satellite TV's—but we're not talking about any ordinary RV. Instead of the plastic and chrome decor of a cookie-cutter design, house trucks are more likely to come with fine wood paneling, leaded- or stained-glass windows,

hardwood floors, and Craftsman-style built-in made of real wood, not fake pine. Of course, the sort of thing doesn't drive off the lot. You need to build such a unique home on wheels yourself—and many have. If you keep your eyes open, you just might spot one of the several hundred that share the black-top with more than 7 million more expensive RVs, says R. Sparks Scott, who keeps track of such things on the house truck website, [www.houseonwheels.com](http://www.houseonwheels.com).

Many are owned by people like Dennis Boyd, who loves the challenge of a renovation and the freedom of the open road. The *Tinoco DVE* he spent \$130,000 and 14 years turning a 1967 'Word La France' trailer into a mobile cabin—complete with oak paneling as elegant from a local mansion. Sure, he could have saved himself the trouble and bought a new RV. But that's not the point. Where else can you get the satisfaction of building your own house, along with knowing that wherever you go, you're home? —Lisa Soto Dine

### THE WHEEL LIFE



#### MOVABLE FEAT

The *Pontiac* Scimitar sport of a 19th-century house truck offered shelter like a house, but the one shock absorber ride was so bumpy an entrepreneur could fill his column with ads in the morning and have to be far from heading west.



#### PANORAMA TOUR

Henry Ford won fame and fortune for his assembly-line cars, but he was also an early RV enthusiast. Outfitting his Model Ts with cooking and sleeping accommodations, he and buddies Harvey Firestone and Thomas Edison would ramble off on camping trips together.



#### MOBILE MANSION

While house trucks move along evenly at diesel engine, houses themselves need a bit more oomph to get from one place to another. A 14-year, 660-ton backhoe in Wisconsin—perhaps the largest residence ever moved—required the help of bridge-designer steel beams, reinforced iron wheels, and superduty hydraulic jacks to relocate it across the street.

PHOTO: WWW.HOUSEONWHEELS.COM; ART: MICHAEL T. KENNEDY

## ON THE JOB

### BUILDER'S BARGAINS

If you don't have time for yard sales or don't live close to a salvage yard, a trip to a great place to start looking for that antique faucet or retro light fixture you've been wanting. There you can find great bargains with vintage treasures for a lot less than you'd pay at a vintage place—most with shipping costs. A recent visit to the site yielded these bargains: —*Keith Fendley*

• A solid maple wood mantle (1½ by 3½ feet; two 2½ by 5½ feet). **Sold for: \$195. Savings:** Approximately \$1,000. Figuring that solid maple paneling goes for about \$25 per square foot.

• 27 original windows from an 1870s Victorian house. **Sold for: \$55.00 for all 27. Savings:** Even though the sashes and ropes weren't included, vintage windows in similar condition can cost as much as \$600 per window.

• Hand-cut wooden shingles circa 1885. **Sold for: \$9.99.** Historical value: Made from hemlock or pine, the 20- or so shingles were made by the cutter's ancestor right after the Civil War; the old cut-and-bake, according to the seller, "told a bit of character."

• Pair of antique solid-brass sconces with new all-glass shades. **Sold for: \$61. Savings:** Anywhere from \$190 to \$200; similar pairings with replacement shades sell for \$200 to \$350 on vintage-lighting websites.



This circa-1890, decorative pressed-metal knob was recently sold on eBay. The owner shipped the knob at point and insured it with rust-preventive lacquer.

**GREAT DEAL**

**SOLD FOR: \$12.25**  
Savings: Similar antique knobs sell for \$400 on a vintage-door-knob website.

PHOTO: JAMES L. COOK FOR SHOWN WILLIAMS & CO.

### [ON THE JOB]



Imagine putting a new coat of Chinese red paint on your living room walls by back-and-forth with bristle brushes alone. Luckily, there's the paint roller—a good friend to anyone who's had to tackle larger reaches of wall surface. It was the creation of Cleveland engineer Richard Crocker Adams, a mural researcher for paint powerhouse Sharrow Williams and a descendant of Presidents John and John Quincy Adams. Can you guess the year in which Adams's wheel-spreading tool debuted? —*C. J. Hughes*

A 1885 // 1922 C. 1940 D. 1985

(turn to *Design* page 24 for the answer)

### [TOD TECHNIQUE]

When transplanting shrubs, 70th-landscaping contractor Roger Cook tags the best "face" of the plant before moving it. That makes it easy to properly reposition the shrub when it's replanted.



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## The \$25,000 Refrigerator

IT MIGHT NOT MAKE ICE, BUT IT'LL STILL MAKE ANY WINE SNOOB HAPPY

IT USED TO BE TIME-KNOWN with a taste for wine could have their own cellar. In recent years, wine cellars were dark, moist, musty places perfect for storing a cache of bottles. Today, with several less and good insulation, these caves aren't as helpful in keeping your prize vintage pristine.

Enter CE, which has created what could possibly be the most elaborate home appliance ever: the Monogram Walk-In Wine Walk. Capable of holding almost 3,100

You can stash your wine under the basement stairs, but if you've got a 1,000-bottle collection, you can have one of these refrigerated units installed in a day.

bottles, the 7-foot-8-inch by 8-foot-4-inch refrigerated cooler can be installed in a basement, a garage, or a spacious kitchen in less than a day. The unit is so well insulated that it can maintain its 55-degree temperature for three days in the event of a power loss. And it comes with design options like a cork floor and a running cable—in which case, the walk will hold only (only!) 955 bottles.

By far, the cooler feature is an easy-to-use computerized wine tracking system that lets you know which bottles are ripe for drinking, not quite mature, or past their prime. The walk's software includes an extensive database, accessed through a 15-inch touch screen mounted to the control unit. From this, you can add or delete bottles, or view a list of all the bottles in the cellar. The software can identify almost any wine you can buy and then print out a tracking label for you to hang from the neck of the bottle.

CE is offering limited distribution of the walk through its Monogram dealers this summer and plans a full-scale rollout next year, with a price tag of \$25,000. Costs, per, for it sure beats employing a full-time sommelier.

—Jason Carpenter



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